HOUSE OF BISHOPS

JAN 25 1989

the DIOCESE of NEWARK

THE RIGHT REVEREND JOHN S. SPONG, D.D.

January 20, 1989

The Rev. Canon H. Boone Porter
Editor of The Living Church
816 East Juneau Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Boone:

I have known you for approximately twenty-five years. I do believe that responsible journalism would require that before you write an editorial, you at least talk to the person about whom you are writing and get the facts. Your editorial about foreign ordinations is so totally incorrect that I am embarrassed for you and The Living Church.

Caroline Pearce came to this country with her bishop's approval. She came to me and I immediately made contact with her bishop in Australia to apprise him of the situation and to receive his encouragement. She became a member of a church in the Diocese of Newark, was recommended by the rector and vestry of that church, went through the psychological screening process in this diocese, was recommended by the Commission on Ministry, was made a postulant, enrolled in the General Theological Seminary, wrote Ember Day letters to me as her bishop for each of the years she was in seminary, graduated from the seminary with honors, passed GOE's with flying colors, was recommended by Standing Committee for candidacy and for ordination to the diaconate, was ordained deacon and was assigned to work as a deacon on the staff of a church in the Diocese of Newark, at which church she was later ordained priest with the consent of the Commission on Ministry and the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Newark.

At the time of her ordination to the priesthood, I notified the primate of Australia and two bishops with whom she was closely associated, including the one who had been her bishop. I had also talked with all of those people at the Lambeth Conference about what we were doing and they approved of it completely. I ordained her as a priest in the Diocese of Newark. I did not ordain her for Australia. She had to return to Australia because her student visa had run out and she was not allowed under a student visa to earn money here in the United States. Her bishop agreed to license her to function as a deacon. Another bishop agreed to license her to function as a visiting priest under very special circumstances which are allowed in the province of Australia. She plans to remain in Australia until next August when the General Synod of that church makes a recommendation as to whether or not they will proceed with the ordination of women. If they do decide to proceed, her bishop has indicated that he would gladly receive her and

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deploy her in priest's orders. If they do not decide to move in that direction, I have assured her that if we can work out the immigration process and bring her here on a green card, that I will have a church to offer her.

At no point did we violate either collegiality or the ecclesiastical boundaries of another province of the church. That information is available to anyone who wishes to receive it, and I do believe that The Living Church was irresponsible in publishing an editorial presumably by its editor without having talked to me to gain the barest minimum of necessary factual material. I do not believe that you did the church a service.

This comes with my best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

John S. Spong,
Bishop
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cc: The Rt. Rev. Edmond Browning
The bishops of the United States of America